

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-30 remain in this application. Claims 1-30 have been amended. For ease of reading and understanding, each of the claims was amended to recite the word “the” in place of “said”. Also, the preamble of several dependent claims was amended to comply with proper claim format. Several clerical errors were also addressed. Any further amendments to the claims are specifically addressed below.

The Examiner indicated in the Official Action that claims 14 and 15 contained allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form. Thus, Applicants have amended claim 14 to include all the limitations of base claim 10.

Claim Objections

Applicants have attended to the formalities in claims 23 and 30 as required by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request that the claim objections be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C § 112 Rejections

Claims 5 has been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants have amended claim 5 to indicate with greater particularity that the audio enhancer “improves the bass response and intelligibility of spoken voice sounds produced by the flat panel transducer.” Support for this limitation can be found on page 16, lines 21-25 of the specification.

Also, Claim 8 was rejected under 35 USC 112 for lack of sufficient antecedent basis for “central paging transmitter”. Accordingly, claim 8 has been amended to recite “a” before this phrase.

35 U.S.C § 103 Rejections

Claims 9-11, 13, 16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,319,088 to Orfield in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,487,296 to Allen et al.

The Examiner has asserted at the bottom of page 4 and the top of page 5 of the Official Action that element [14] is a “system controller”. The Examiner further asserts that element [14] is contained in an element [19] (which the Examiner appears to characterize as Applicants’ “electronics module”).

To address the Examiner’s specific rejection, and for the purpose of clarity, Applicants respectfully submit that neither element [14] or [19] of Orfield is a “system controller”. As described by Orfield in column 3, lines 20-22, element [14] is a “master sound masking unit”. The “master sound masking unit” [14] appears to contain the electronic components such as the masking sound generator [20], amplifier [22], etc., as well as the dual voice coil speaker [26]. Orfield does not describe or suggest that its “master sound masking unit” [14] has integrated therein Applicants’ system controller as described above. If anything, Orfield’s masking unit [14] is more akin to Applicant’s “electronics module” which houses Applicants’ electronic speaker components.

Moreover, Applicants submit that Orfield merely uses reference numeral [19] to identify the “enclosed portion” of the master unit [14]. (See column 3, lines 25-27). Thus, element [19] cannot be said to be Applicants’ system controller.

Accordingly, Applicants assert that Orfield and Allen et al., in combination, do not describe or suggest all of the elements recited in each of independent claims 9 and 10.

Applicants submit that each claim requires integrating a system controller into the electronics module. As described on page 21, lines 6-10, Applicants' system controller

includes a radio receiver (not shown) for receiving the RF signals detected by the antenna 202 and demodulating the signals to extract the control and/or audio information therefrom. The system controller 300 also houses a microprocessor or micro-controller that is appropriately programmed to interpret the demodulated signals and appropriate electronic switching networks to route them to the other components within the electronics module depending on the nature of the signals received.

By way of example, Applicants' system controller is configured and programmed to deliver demodulated paging announcement messages received wirelessly from the central paging transmitter or remote control unit to the audio effects unit where effects such as equalization and ducking may be applied and the resulting signal forwarded on through the system to drive the transducer. Thus, the speaker unit of the present invention is not only capable of generating masking and background noise, it is also capable of integrating a paging and announcement system that can be used to page individuals within the space.

Conversely, at no point does Orfield or Allen et al. describe or suggest integrating such a "system controller" into the electronics module of the speaker unit/system.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 9 and 10, and claims which depend therefrom, should be found allowable.

Additionally, Applicants have amended claim 11 to indicate clearly that the system controller receives "wireless paging messages" from the paging transmitter. Neither Orfield nor Allen et al. describe or suggest a wireless interface between the

paging transmitter and the system controller. Thus, claim 11, as amended, contains allowable subject matter.

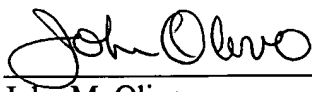
Claims 1-8, 12, 17 and 19-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Orfield in view of Allen et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,164,408 to Lamm et al.

Applicants submit that the argument set forth above with respect to the lack of a "system controller" being described or suggested by the references cited also applies equally to independent claims 1, 19 and 28. The above argument is thus incorporated herein by reference. For this reason, the Applicants respectfully request that the 103(a) rejection be withdrawn with respect to claims 1, 19 and 28, as well as the claims which depend therefrom.

Applicants submit that all the claims are believed to be in a condition for allowance. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

12/2/04
Date



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